



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

4700 River Road
Riverdale, MD 20737

NOV 15 1998

November 13, 1998

Committee for Children
2112 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, Suite 1008
Washington, DC 20009-6525

This is in response to your letter regarding the United Poultry Concerns' (UPC) petition on forced molting of laying hens. The petition was discussed by the USDA Farm Animal Well-Being Task Group during a July 1998 meeting, and it was confirmed that USDA has no authority to prohibit or otherwise regulate this practice. However, it was decided to contact the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regarding their followup to a similar petition which they had received from UPC. We were informed that FDA has received public comments on the petition over the past several months. Once FDA has reviewed the comments and formulated their position on the issue, we will coordinate with them to determine if any interagency action is indicated.

We appreciate your concerns in the areas of food safety and animal welfare.

Sincerely,

W. Ron DeHaven
Deputy Administrator
Animal Care



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98A-0203

NOV 15 1998

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URGENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO BAN FORCED MOLTING OF HENS

- Each year the US Egg industry force molts -- intentionally starves for up to 14 days -- millions of hens to manipulate egg production. Forced molting is so stressful it destroys the hens' immune system, predisposing the birds and their eggs to salmonella poison. The US Dept of Agriculture's Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS) stated: *"FSIS recognizes that public health concerns are raised by highly stressful forced molting practices. For example, extended starvation and water deprivation practices lead to increased shedding of Salmonella enteritidis (Se) by laying hens subjected to these practices."*

The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) is requesting public comments on reducing egg borne diseases because of the many illnesses and deaths caused by contaminated eggs.

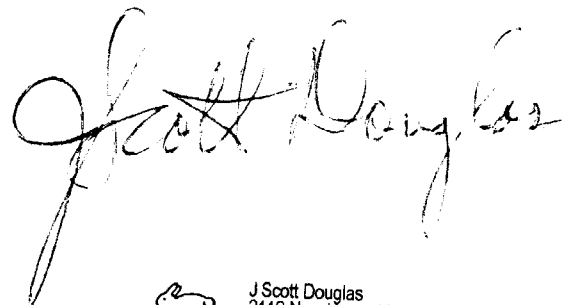
PLEASE WRITE FDA BY SEPTEMBER 20, 1999:

DOCKETS MANAGEMENT BRANCH (HFA-305)
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

TO BE COUNTED YOUR LETTER MUST STATE THESE 3 DOCKET NUMBERS:

98N-1230; 96P-0418; 97P-0197. Then say in your own words:

- -FDA must do more than put Bacteria warning labels on egg cartons and regulate egg refrigeration temperatures.
- -FDA should prohibit the practice of forced molting because forced molting has been scientifically shown to promote disease by destroying the starving hens' immune systems.
- -FDA has jurisdiction to ban farm practices, such as forced molting, that injure human health.
- -FDA must ban the forced molting of laying hens because forced molting is a primary cause of infectious diseases in hens, eggs, and consumers of eggs. **THE CRUELTY & CONTAMINATION ARE LINKED !**
- -FDA was petitioned in April 1998 to ban forced molting. This petition should be granted without further delay.



J Scott Douglas
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Washington DC 20009-6559